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Is Disarmament Soon to Come?

The suggestions made by General Miles, on his retirement from the position of Commander of the Army of the United States, in reference to the reduction of the armaments of the world, are a new evidence that the question of disarmament is becoming every day a more pressing and vital one, and that it cannot be put down.

Ever since the publication of the Czar's Rescript five years ago, in which the emphasis was laid most strongly upon the burdensomeness of existing armaments and the necessity of finding relief from them, the question has been more and more occupying the thoughts of responsible statesmen and also of all thinking people. The judgment of the Hague Conference in the resolution which it passed on the subject has proved itself to be, we are certain, the general judgment of civilized peoples: "The Conference considers that a limitation of the military burdens which at the present time weigh upon the world is greatly to be desired in order to the advancement of both the material and moral well-being of humanity." That was the opinion of a hundred as eminent men

as ever came together in international council. They did not feel themselves authorized to go any further than this declaration, but many of them *thought* a good deal further, as large numbers of intelligent people in different countries are doing to-day. The question is rapidly pressing itself to the front and will soon have to be answered in some way.

Just recently the English Government made it known that it would welcome proposals for limitation of armaments from whatever influential quarter they might come. That statement is in itself half a proposition, and makes it clear that in Great Britain as elsewhere the men who guide affairs feel the constant obsession of what de Witte, the manager of the Russian Budget, declared a little while ago to be "the nightmare of every European finance minister." The recent startling increase of England's military and naval expenses has alarmed the English political leaders and all their efforts to keep up a good countenance are beginning to break.

The question of disarmament has been brought into still greater prominence by the recent remarkable action of Chili and the Argentine Republic. These two progressive and prosperous South American republics have set an example which puts to shame the professions of nations claiming to be much more advanced in civilization than they. Because of an acute boundary dispute between them, they had carried the increase of their armaments to a point where they had become burdensome in the extreme, and made the peril of war imminent. Under the influence, however, of better counsels their governments less than two years ago got together, had the boundary dispute successfully arbitrated, and then proceeded to relieve themselves in considerable measure of the burdens of their armaments. They agreed by treaty to forego the completion of the great battleships and cruisers which were building for them in European shipyards, and, as is well known, four of these big vessels are now waiting for a buyer. They also agreed to take off, and have actually taken off, some of the larger guns from their other warships. They went still further and stipulated with each other to reduce their land armies to the proportions of police forces. The results of this extraordinary action, wholly unexpected in that quarter of the world, have been most remarkable. The two republics under the new arrangement have the same relative strength as they had before. The friction and recrimination between them have almost entirely died

away. The Argentine Minister of Marine has turned over two of the naval vessels to the Minister of Agriculture, and they have been made parts of the merchant marine. The expenses for armaments have not only stopped growing but have already begun to decrease.

Why cannot what has been done by these two neighboring states, formerly hostile to each other and armed to the teeth, be done by any other two nations, or by all the armed powers? To ask the question is to answer it, and to silence all gainsayers.

General Miles, like his more distinguished predecessor, General Grant, on retiring from the head of the army, has put into formal statement an opinion on the general subject of the armaments of the world which he has been known for a good while to hold, and which it would be well for the civilized world at once to heed. The scheme of a general limitation of armaments which he has suggested is beyond question, as he says, "possible, practicable and most desirable." What he suggests is that the strength of the armies should be materially reduced and then based on population; that each nation should maintain a force of not more than one to every thousand of its population. This would reduce the German army to about fifty-five thousand men, the French to forty thousand, and those of other nations in the same proportion, and would leave them relatively in the same position that they are to-day.

General Miles does not mention the navies in his project but no reasons exist why the same law could not be made to govern their strength also.

He would have the United States take the initiative and call an international congress to meet at Washington at which an agreement should be entered into for the reduction of all the great armies to the degree which he proposes, and that then the army of no nation should be increased beyond this standard. Whether the suggestion is likely to be seriously considered is a matter of grave doubt, so deeply has the military mania fastened itself upon the great powers of the world. But that it ought to be seriously considered is perfectly clear. If the present course of the governments is much longer persisted in, they will scarcely be able to avoid a very rude awakening from their nightmare.

If General Miles' scheme could be carried out, the relief from the present strained condition would be very great. The amount of good feeling and confidence which would be thereby produced would create an entirely new international political atmosphere. The war budgets would begin to clap their hands for very joy, and the peoples, growing each year more exhausted and restless under the burdens imposed upon them, would begin to lift their heads in great hope. Why cannot the great governments of the world see that their interest in this matter would also be their crowning honor?

The Upheaval in European Turkey.

The long expected upheaval in the provinces of European Turkey seems at last to have begun, and it is doubtful now if the powers can do anything to stay it. The whole region is full of excitement and violence. The details of the daily butcheries, burning of villages, dynamiting of bridges and trains, annihilation of bodies of men, unspeakable acts of cruelty and outrage upon women and children, are sickening in the extreme. It would seem that brutality, instigated by religious bigotry, race hatred and the spirit of vengeance, could go no further. All sentiments of humanity seem to be crushed out, and the whole country is swiftly becoming a scene of indescribable disorder and lawlessness.

How a war of serious proportions can be longer avoided it is difficult to see. There is probably no other outcome to the condition of things which has long prevailed in that region, even if the conflict should be checked for the moment. The wonder is that the storm has so long hung without breaking. Not even the most radical opponent of war expects that peace can be preserved where every condition of peace is wanting. To say this is not to justify war; it is the exact opposite; it is only to point out that if war is to be avoided the causes which produce it must be removed. It is to magnify its wickedness by showing the base and deadly roots from which it springs. In war it is not the fighting, inhuman and ghastly as that is, which is the fundamental iniquity; it is the wickedness of spirit which is back of it. A great war in the Balkans would simply be the last hideous revelation of the fiendish and vengeful passions which have ruled the souls of the people there almost since the memory of man, and made of a naturally beautiful region a veritable Gehenna.

The present situation has been brought about chiefly by three causes, to say nothing of the incidental influence of Bulgaria's political ambition. The first of these is, of course, the religious bigotry and tyranny of the Turk, which have manifested themselves from time immemorial in the high-handed suppression of every cry for freedom and political right on the part of the non-Mussulman population, and in the repeated wholesale massacres and outrages which have curdled the blood of humane people everywhere. The deeds of the Turkish troops which are now reported from Macedonia and the borders of Bulgaria, make it plain that no change whatever has taken place in the Moslem heart. But in spite of the cruel hand which the Turk has laid upon the people, his effort to bring about submission and peace in this way has proved a complete failure, as such procedure always has proved, unless a population is completely annihilated.

The second cause of the situation has been the spirit of retaliation and vengeance on the part of the